1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

place.) The "arsenal" at Bendiyagalge is well seen in Plate XIX, figures 1 and 2, while at Pihilegodagalge all the bows and arrows were rested on an old ant heap in the centre of the cave.

Though men do sometimes dig for yams, hunting is essentially their work, and yams were usually dug by the women who also do the cooking. This is of the simplest kind; yams are roasted in ashes, in which way meat may also be cooked, while practically everything else is boiled in a pot over three stones. Many Veddas also know how to cook curry, and deer's flesh is dried on a rack and smoked. A rack is built usually in a sunny place, the meat is put on this and a smoky fire kept burning beneath it, the flesh is thus dried in the sun and smoked simultaneously. This process is usually superintended by men.

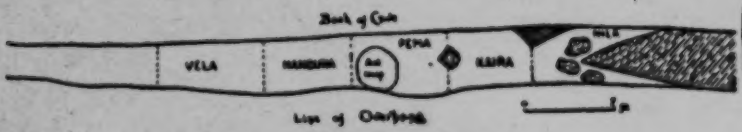

Fig. 2. Plan of Pihilegodagalge.

Plate XVII, figure 1, shows a rack built to smoke meat on the top of the Bendiyagalge rock-mass.

A Vedda will never sleep on the ground if there is any rock upon which he can lie. If he has a deerskin or a piece of cloth he will lie on it, if not he does not seem to object to the cold rock, and so avoids contact with the ground damp from the heavy dews. He always keeps a small fire burning beside him; this was noticed by Nevill, who says: "A Vaedda never sleeps without a smouldering fire by his side. I am assured, should accident oblige them to do so, they have usually died from a fever caught by the omission[1]."

The Veddas are strictly monogamous, and we were able to confirm Bailey's observations as regards their marital fidelity. "Their constancy to their wives is a very remarkable trait in their character in a country where conjugal fidelity is certainly not classed as the highest of domestic virtues. Infidelity,

[1] *Taprobanian*, Vol. 1, Aug. 1886, p. 187.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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302 431 585 593 sister said, "Don't be sorry, I will give you a lock of my hair." She cut a lock from her own head, which he kept until his marriage when he gave it to his wife while she was still at her father's cave. Then he took her to his own cave where she made him a waist string on the second or third day after marriage. To his sister who was then unmarried he gave an axe out of gratitude. Nila cut a lock from his head to give his wife, as his sister was away at the time he was married, otherwise she would have given him one. Pema did not give his wife any hair as her mother had given her some.

302 431 585 184 Among the village Veddas at Unuwatura Bubula the custom of giving hair as a wedding gift was not known, yet the shaman's wife had a lock which her mother had given her. She assured us that only married women might wear it.

586 Anything like a formal divorce is unknown, but we heard of one instance occurring three generations ago, in which a woman who had gone to live with her husband left him and returned to her parents. The daughter of a Bingoda man, whose nickname Kupunkarea is still remembered, was given to a boy nicknamed Kankuna "Sore Eyes." As he was lazy and took no trouble to support his wife, so that she was frequently obliged to go to her parents for food, they kept her with them. Kankuna was very angry, but he did not threaten violence or attempt to bring back his wife by force. Later she was given to a Vedda of Bandaraduwa and after his death she went to live with a Sinhalese. It was said that she was an unusually pretty girl.

595 It is quite certain that polyandry never existed among uncontaminated Veddas, but at Henebedda we met with one case that must, we think, be called by this name. Before relating this we may, however, call attention to the fact that polyandry is a tolerably common practice among the Sinhalese peasants of the Vedirata, as it is among the less educated classes in other parts of the island[1].

[1] Cf. *Papers on the Custom of Polyandry as practised in Ceylon*, Government Record-Office, Colombo, in which Mr R. W. Ievers, speaking of the Kegalla district, says:—"Having been for six years in charge of a Kandyan district (Kegalla), and having to deal with land cases involving rights of inheritance, and having, as Registrar of Kandyan Marriages, to hear divorce cases, I have found that the custom of polyandry was almost universal; and that in the case of a marriage registered under

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

The individuals concerned in the polyandrous marriage at Henebedda are Handuna (8), the Vidane Appuhami (4), and Kandi (10)[1]. It will be seen from the genealogy that Handuna and Appuhami are the sons of a brother and sister, both have intercourse with Kandi, though the latter is nominally the wife of Handuna who is the older man. Kandi is an unusually pretty woman and considerably younger than either. We were told that Appuhami at one time lived with Badeni (11), his father's sister's grandchild, but was compelled to give her up on account of the jealousy displayed by Kandi.

We have already pointed out that a man spends much of his time with his father-in-law, i.e. with his wife's people, hunting and wandering with them and having perfectly free access to his father-in-law's hunting ground and fishing pools; at Sitala Wanniya we were told that after a few days spent in a shelter on the territory in the man's community to which the bridegroom carried his bride on first receiving her, the young couple should return to the bride's group. Even at the present day this is the case to a great extent, though among settled communities as at Bandaraduwa there is a tendency for the women to come to the man's community and stay there with him[2].

Pregnancy is diagnosed after two menstrual periods have been missed. The change in the breasts is not noticed. Birth takes place in the cave (unless labour should come on suddenly and occur in the jungle); no screen is put up, and any woman will assist the parturient woman; the cord is cut with an arrow—the common tool used for all cutting purposes—and the afterbirth is thrown away. The umbilicus is treated with cloth and ashes, and the portion of the umbilical cord which drops from the navel is not preserved. We never heard of a case of twins.

During labour the patient leans back with one shoulder or

the Ordinance the name of the elder brother was given as that of the bridegroom, but everyone was aware that the girl would regard the other brothers as being equally her husbands."

[1] The numbers in parentheses refer to the genealogy on p. 60.

[2] Both *binna* and *diga* marriages occur among the peasant Sinhalese but, according to Mr Bibile, *diga* marriage is the common practice.

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5
Sinhalese AX4

very careful in my inquiries on the subject. Had it existed, the neighbouring Singhalese would have had no hesitation in accusing them of it, but I could not obtain a trace of it. Tennent's remarks on this subject are wholly inapplicable to the wild Veddahs of Bintenne or Nilgala, though they may apply to those Veddahs of whom he writes.*

They never marry out of their race, and, with the very smallest cause, the men are exceedingly jealous of their most unattractive wives. They are very careful to keep them apart from their companions. Their huts contain but one family each, and when they live in caves, each dwelling-place is carefully screened off. There are as many as seventeen separate huts and caves among the seventy-two Veddahs of Nilgala; hardly more than four individuals to each habitation.

Polyandry is unknown among them. The practice is alluded to with genuine disgust. I asked a Veddah once, what the consequence would be if one of their women were to live with two husbands, and the unaffected vehemence with which he raised his axe, and said, "a blow would settle it," shewed conclusively to my mind, the natural repugnance with which they regard this national custom of their Kandyan neighbours. Their abstinence from a practice, which, till 1859, was recognized by the laws of the land, is remarkable. So sensitive are they on these subjects, that I know an instance of a Veddah—and he was by no means one of the wildest—drawing his knife, and being with difficulty restrained from using it, at a remark made in jest which he considered a reflection on the honour of their women.†

It is notorious that the Kandyans have no scruples with regard to divorce. Among them, husbands desert their wives, and wives their husbands, for any or no reason. Sickness is perhaps the most common cause. The heartless desertion of a sick wife is, I think, the worst trait in the Kandyan character, and the cool and unconcerned manner in which they themselves allude to it, shows that it is as common as it is cruel.‡

* Tennent, vol. ii, part ix, chap. iii, p. 444, 2nd edit.

† Tennent says, "The community is too poor to afford polygamy," but I am convinced that is not the cause of its non-existence. We find it in smaller communities than these.

‡ In a civil suit in the District Court some years ago, a witness said in reply to a question from me—"How can I tell how many wives he had? A woman is married to-day, and leaves her husband to-morrow. If the wife gets sick, the husband deserts her; if the husband, the wife deserts him." A young girl of sixteen or so once coolly confessed before me to having had five husbands, three of whom were living, and two present in court, of whom one had just attempted suicide for her sake! I met with an instance of a man who had been married fifteen times; and I have heard of a woman who had had thirteen husbands.

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

of the bark of the Ritti (*Antiaris toxicaria*) for males, and a sort of leaf-skirt for the females.

No jewellery was worn by the males or females. Sometimes a necklace made of shells ("Bellan") was worn by the younger females, but such things as rings were unknown to the earlier Veddas.

They had no idea of time beyond the subdivision of the 24 hours into two divisions, viz., that of light and darkness. Other than this there was no computation except a man's knowledge of a certain striking event that happened in his "small time," but how long ago that was could not be stated.

The taking of a woman to wife required mainly the sanction of the girl's father, after which a few exchanges might be made in signification of the consent of parties. After this the man and woman lived together, while before they would not so much as dare speak to one another in public, unless related.

The age of the woman was invariably extremely youthful at the time of her "marriage," and even at the present day, notwithstanding the comparative civilization of the modern Vedda descendants, youthful marriages still prevail.

I found in response to my inquiries in all parts of the Vedda country that I visited, that 12 years was a common age for a girl to be taken to wife at. In one village I was present at an inquiry by a headman into a case where the girl was only 8. In this case the headman expressed the opinion that the marriage was "very bad."

My informant told me that with the Veddas there was no custom for the woman, when about to give birth to a child, to go to a separate house or hut for the purpose, but that this custom had only come in later.

Among the Veddas there was no such thing as prostitution, nor could I learn that there was polyandry.

The bearing age of women would be at about 14, that of puberty being a year earlier.

Women would have children up to about 28, and as might be expected from the condition of youthful cohabitation for one or two years prior to puberty, the proportion of males and females in a family would be pretty nearly equal. On

these Veddas. Bingoda is not all Vedda; essentially it is a Sinhalese *gama* village of about six or eight families, within a stone's throw of which are the crude huts belonging to the few surviving Veddas. Through a tangle of overgrown scrub we reach them; they are not so numerous that we cannot easily name every single Vedda there.

Three we have met before, Suthubanda, Gama and Badapissa; it was they who led us such a chase at Galmede. In the first hut we find the swarthy Gama and his comely young wife Kalu—his fifth experiment in matrimony: and he barely twenty-five! Not far from this is Suthubanda's abode, in which are his wife, the skinny Thuthi, mother by previous marriage of Gamma; their two little boys, Handuna and Naida and girls Kumi and Punji. Handuna is the quaintest brat imaginable; he is ash-coloured from top to toe, through crouching by the hearth all night to keep warm his naked body; for, all he has for cover is a little strip of loin cloth drooping erratically from a slack waist-string that sags well below his nates; his rotund abdomen accommodates an enormous spleen; with hands crossed over shrugged shoulders to keep the chill awa... he gazes quizzically at you.

Away from these two homes, across the stream, is the only other Vedda *hut*. Unlike those of Suthubanda and Gama which are of wattle and *bast*, this is a sadly dilapidated mud structure once occupied by a Moor. It is the most pathetic and curious menage here, and belongs to Kaira brother of Suthubanda. His wife Randunna, a hideous squint-eyed thing, is mother by a previous husband to Heenthuthi the twelve-year old wife of Badapissa (Muthua), Kaira's younger brother! A more ridiculous pair it would be hard to find: the wife a mere child, the husband barely more. The Veddas favour such early marriages, saying that, growing up thus together, the two learn to love each other well. Be that as it may, it does seem a most piteous travesty of human matings. Huddled by the hearth and shivering with ague, is old Thanthi mother of the clan, and wife of the dead chief Neela. And, lastly, we have here the most pathetic figure in all Bingoda—Kummi, a girl of fifteen, dust-besmeared, ulcerated, crippled, and so scantily clad that she is ashamed to stand lest she reveal her nakedness. A misery to herself and others, she sits apart with face shyly lowered, taking timid glances every now and then, like some wild thing, from large black lustrous eyes that might have shone befittingly on the face of some proud beauty.

To these, though they now dwelt apart at Mullegama, we must add Kaurala and his family, for he too was of Bingoda, and is maternal uncle of Suthubanda. By his two wives, Balli and Ranni, he has four little sons, Kaira Vanniya, Heratha, Kalua and Sela; and two daughters, Ranni and Dingi.

These details, though perhaps tedious, serve to bring out vividly the intimate inter-relationships of the Veddas, their apparent disregard of appearance or age in their choice of wives, the promiscuity of life in their one-roomed homes—mother, child and father all lying huddled together in a little space. For all that it must not be assumed that Veddas are devoid of a moral code. A man may have more than one wife, it is true; and, if it pleases him, he may cast her aside like a worn garment; but to each man his own woman while she is his; that is the Vedda law which all respect.